

THE

PENNY BLACK P L A T E S

Great Britain issued the Penny Black on 6 May 1840. It was eventually printed from eleven plates, the last black printing occurring in February 1841. Seven of these 'black' plates also were also used to print the Penny Red when the colour was changed for security reasons. Printing in red commenced in December 1840.

The exhibit explores each plate in numerical order, first showing the black stamps then, as applicable, the red printings from that plate. Many matched positions are shown.

The manufacture of the plates using mid nineteenth century technology led to many interesting varieties and these are studied in depth. Examples of the uses of the stamps are shown but no attempt has been made to explore the postal history of the time.



Examples of essays submitted by Charles Whiting for the 1839 Treasury competition seeking ideas and designs for postage stamps and stamped covers.